

**HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
CITY HALL, 1115 BROADWAY  
WEDNESDAY, November 6, 2024  
12:00 PM**

**Call to Order:**

The November 6, 2024, meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:01 PM by Chairman Jim Meridith. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

**Roll Call:**

Members present: Chairman Jim Meridith, Vice-Chairman Diane Korte-Lindsey, Marshall Rinderer, and Kurt Vonder Haar

Members absent: Josh Kloss

Also present: City Manager Chris Conrad, Director of Economic Development Mallord Hubbard, Deputy Clerk Lana Hediger and Recording Secretary Chris Flake.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Marshall Rinderer made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2024, Regular Session meeting of the Industrial Development Commission; seconded by Diane Korte-Lindsey. All members present voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

**Reports:**

**Treasurer's Report – Prepared by Director of Finance Reanna Ohren – Mallord Hubbard**

Mallord Hubbard stated that there were no transactions since the last treasurer's report. The cash on hand totals \$27,020.11. We need to determine what we want to do with the CD that will be maturing at the end of this month. Mallord stated that the Director of Finance, Reanna Ohren, volunteered to reach out to local banks to see where their interest rates were at.

Chris Conrad advised the board that another option could be to invest in The Illinois Funds. The Illinois Funds are offered to governments through the Illinois Treasurer's Office. Diane Korte-Lindsey would like Reanna to check the local banks. Conrad stated that we will let the CD expire and we can bring options to the next meeting. Marshall Rinderer made a motion to let the CD expire and Kurt Vonder Haar seconded the motion. All members present vote aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

### **Updates on Developments and other City Projects – Mallord Hubbard**

Mallord stated that there was an approval of a preliminary plat for the Tut Property, in the September Combined Planning and Zoning meeting. There was also an approval of a short-term rental at 608 Pine Street. Lastly, there was a request to rezone 12448 Sportsman Road. The Sportsman Road site will be a daycare and Mama's Rehab will be moving to town.

Mallord stated that at tonight's Combined Planning and Zoning meeting, there is a special use permit for a short-term rental located at 405 Walnut Street. There are several items on the agenda for a solar farm on Highland Road. The items included a rezoning from Madison County Agriculture to Industrial, an annexation and several variances. We have seen an increase in development coming from Combined Planning and Zoning.

Mallord stated that Seasons Inn has been undergoing extensive renovations to the pool and hotel rooms. They are going floor by floor and changing out the beds and furniture. They are doing approximately \$400,000 in renovations.

The lofts about Gauchos are open and they are being rented out. Plaza Storage expansion is going well.

Mallord stated that Korte Meats is open. We had a Rotary meeting there and it turned out great. That building sat vacant for a while and we are glad a local business moved in. Korte Meats expanded their grocery capacity and can also host events.

The future Japanese restaurant is slow moving. The address is 821 Poplar Street. We haven't seen any permits being pulled on that building. They are having an issue finding a contractor.

Mallord stated that there is activity on the square. The building next to Tullaghan's is being renovated. They are going to turn it into a retail shop. The old Highland Geek Squad, will be the home of the Sweet Spot candy store. The Sweet Spot is hoping to be open for the Christmas parade. We have a couple of buildings on the square that may require new owners, however it is too early to tell.

Mallord stated that we have had conversations with Aldi. We have had a handful of meetings and there are details to work out with Aldi and IDOT. Aldi requires two entrances for their stores and they are working with IDOT to make that happen. They are hoping to break ground in the middle of 2025.

Sixth Street will be open next week. All they have left is dirt work and unfortunately the weather has pushed it back a few days.

Marshall Rinderer asked if there has been any movement on the hotel. Conrad said there is ongoing conversations with an investment group.

### **Update on Highland Communication Services – Chris Conrad**

Conrad stated that we surpassed 2,700 customers. We are way beyond the market saturation and very happy with where we are at with HCS.

### **Update on Workforce Development Initiatives – Mallord Hubbard**

Mallord stated that there is no substantial movement. The CEO program is getting up and going. Highland has expanded their representation with the amount of CEO students and also businesses that support the program. We will continue to highlight the program. The program gives high school students the ability to work with businesses in town.

### **New Business:**

#### **Report On Monthly Tax Revenues – Chris Conrad**

Chris Conrad provided the following monthly tax revenues:

Sales Tax – For September we are at \$296,848.62 and October we are at \$300,509.79. We are up 1% from last year and it appears we are seeing pre-covid growth.

Business District Tax – For September we are at \$151,862.24 and October we are at \$140,642.18. We are up 6% from last year.

Non-Home Rule Tax – For September we are at \$174,197.99 and October we are at \$169,946.21. We remain flat from last year.

Income Tax – For September we are at \$87,443.79 and October we are at \$186,724.89. We are up 12% from last year. There are more income tax receipts being collected.

Use Tax – For September we are at \$28,032.56 and October we are at \$ 28,806.28. We are down 7% from last year.

Marijuana Tax – For September we are at \$1,230.10 and October we are at \$ 1,275.97. We remain flat from last year and see no growth.

Excise/Telecom Tax – For September we are at \$9,075.55 and October we are at \$8,732.22. We are down 9% from last year.

Gaming Tax – For September we are at \$22,513.10 and August we were at \$20,748.43. We are up 12% from last year.

Diane Korte-Lindsey asked if there were any new gaming machines in town. Conrad stated that we haven't seen any growth. We are hovering around 86-90 gaming machines in town. Diane Korte-Lindsey thinks Korte Meats may be getting gaming machines.

Conrad stated that he recently met with the Fire Department. He informed them that the City receives 22% from property taxes. We have statutory limits on what we can levy. Currently we are maxed out at \$182,000 for Police and Fire. We can't levy more

than that. The figure was an eye opener for the Fire Department. The State of Illinois has been increasing grant money. The City has hired a consulting firm that lobbies in Springfield. We are hoping to receive grant money to fund the South Poplar Road project. There is a possibility we may see increases in revenue through grant programs, which is funded by the State.

Conrad informed the board that the city council approved the grocery tax and we have filed it with the Department of Revenue. There are a dozen communities in the area that have already passed it and the rest of the communities are waiting until after their April elections to implement the grocery tax.

Marshall Rinderer asked if there is any money from sports betting that comes back to the city. Conrad stated that he does not know how it would.

Conrad stated that we received a grant to repave Broadway. This grant comes up every 2 years. The past several years, the grant has been awarded to communities with trails. We submitted a grant for the Sursee Trail to connect to the new primary school. The hang-up for the Broadway Streetscape Project is once you get past Michaels, there is not much room from the road to the front door of the businesses.

Conrad stated that we received several grants from Madison County Transit for \$50,000 for trails. The grant will update our master trail plan. Highland would like to connect with Grantfork through our shared use plan.

The City would like to redo our comprehensive plan. We have accomplished everything in our comprehensive plan, except for building a new pool. We will wait until we get a new council, to begin that process.

#### **Trends in Retail Presentation Summary (IML Annual Conference) – Mallord Hubbard**

Mallord advised the board that he went to the Illinois Municipal League conference with City Manager Chris Conrad. There were a number of sessions that we attended. There was a session giving by a firm called the Retail Coach, which focused on trends in retail and development. They are a nationwide firm and have a lot of experience with municipalities.

They expressed that retail development leads to an increased demand for residential development. Inflation has been a concern and affects construction costs. Interest rates are top of mind for many developers. For several years there was a heavy trend towards e-commerce and they were worried about the brick and mortar stores. They reported that people still want to go to brick and mortar stores. There is a need for redevelopment opportunities. They are seeing businesses redo older buildings. There is a trend away from multiple stores and more towards single business developments. Redvelopments are focused on wanting good visibility and parking.

A new key word that is gaining traction is retailtainment. Retailtainment is combining shopping with entertainment. An example of that would be Puttshack and Top Golf.

Mallord stated that the City has to manage the goals and expectations of our community. The best practice for communities are to have information readily available when businesses inquire about coming to town. We participate with intersect Illinois. We try to work with businesses to make it easy on them, compared to other communities around us.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

**Adjournment**

Marshall Rinderer made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Diane Korte Lindsey. All members present voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.